

10

U.S. AMERICANS IN MEXICO: CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES IN MONTERREY¹

Robert Baumgardner

This paper is a description of the present-day U.S. American expatriate community in the northern Mexican city of Monterrey. It first traces the history of the U.S. American presence in Monterrey, which reached its peak during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz in the late nineteenth century. Special attention is given to two U.S. Americans — Joseph A. Robertson and Juan F. Brittingham — who played an important role in the development of the city. The paper then describes the lives of seven U.S. Americans who presently live in the city and who are representative of the diversity in the resident U.S. American community. Finally, the processes of acculturation of U.S. Americans in Monterrey are discussed from the perspectives of language and identity: the experiences of these U.S. emigrants in Mexico are found to be similar to those of other communities living in diaspora.

Introduction

According to the United States Department of State, there are more U.S. citizens in Mexico than in any other country in the world other than the United States and Canada.² Mexico's large U.S. community is very diverse, encompassing all major groups described in sociological immigrant literature — the tourist, the expatriate, the sojourner, and the settler (Cohen 1977). From retirees, students, teachers, businesspersons, missionaries, diplomats, and other professionals to writers and artists, drifters and hippies, and citizens of U.S. origin married to Mexicans, the U.S. population in Mexico is perhaps more highly visible than that of any other foreign community. A sizable 'American colony', made up of both permanent as well as temporary-resident U.S. Americans, can be found in Mexico's three largest cities — Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey — and smaller cities like Acapulco, Cuernavaca and Puebla, among numerous others, also have resident U.S. Americans. U.S. retirees in Mexico — so-called seasonal 'snowbirds' or

'winterbirds' — now constitute the largest concentration of U.S. retirees outside the United States (see, e.g., Otero 1997). And, while the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 served to further boost U.S. presence in Mexico (as well as Mexican presence in the U.S.), this presence is by no means a recent phenomenon. From the time Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, a multitude of U.S. Americans have visited, engaged in both business and war, lived in and settled in Mexico.

In the present chapter I will focus on the U.S. American presence in the northern Mexican city of Monterrey, provincial capital of the state of Nuevo León. Situated some 150 miles south of Laredo, Texas, Monterrey is a unique cultural, social, economic and political blend in the Mexican mosaic. It is a city which has looked for direction at least as much north to its nearest neighbor, the United States, as it has south to the seat of federal government in Mexico City. I will show how this position vis-à-vis the United States is reflected in the perceived identity of the U.S. American community in Monterrey. My work is based on participant observation in the community³ as well as on twenty interviews with U.S. Americans resident in Monterrey conducted during August 1998 and follow-up interviews and telephone conversations in January 1999. My presentation will begin with a brief history of the city of Monterrey during important periods in Mexican history and the part U.S. Americans have played in that history. I will concentrate in that discussion on the roles of two prominent U.S. American entrepreneurs who helped in the shaping of Monterrey — Joseph A. Robertson and Juan F. Brittingham. I will then present seven profiles of U.S. Americans who I feel are representative of the city's present-day U.S. community. The presentation concludes with a discussion of the process of acculturation with respect to Spanish-language acquisition and questions of identity of U.S. Americans in Monterrey, which are found to parallel those of other communities in diaspora.

Background

The city of Monterrey, which celebrated its 400th anniversary in 1996, was founded in 1596 by Diego de Montemayor on commission of the Spanish crown; it had earlier served as a Spanish colonial outpost under different names. Today, the city and its residents enjoy a distinct reputation throughout Mexico: 'there is no doubt of the mystique of Monterrey in the Mexican context: it is hard work and industriousness, seasoned with stinginess' (Balán, Browning and Jelin 1973:37-38). Varying beliefs underlie this mystique. Balán, Browning and Jelin (1973:38), for example, note that 'the early inhabitants of Monterrey became so industrious precisely because of the difficult conditions (arid land and warlike Indians) they encountered, unlike the settlers of richer lands in central Mexico...' Other commentators point to the background of the early settlers of Mexico; Condon (1997:4), for example, has noted that 'The Spanish who came to Mexico were from all parts of Spain and all classes, backgrounds, regions, and religions. Sephardic Jews from southern Spain, fleeing the forced conversions and impending Inquisition, were a substantial part of the early Spanish presence in Mexico'.

One of Monterrey's earlier founders and subsequent governor of the state of Nuevo León, Luis Carvajal y de la Cueva, died in a Mexico City prison during the Holy Inquisition, accused by his own relatives of being a crypto-Jew. Notes Borton de Treviño (1953:189): '...long before modern industrial Monterrey had begun to rise out of sound Jewish knowledge of markets, banking, trade, and credits, many a novel — romantic, bloody, cruel, and strange — had been lived out by the New Christians and their sons and daughters' (see Hoyo 1979 for the intrigue surrounding the life of Carvajal). Whatever the roots of its success, modern-day Monterrey is indisputably the leading industrial city in northeastern Mexico.

This was not always the case. Monterrey's development during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was very slow, because of frequent wars with Indians and the city's location far from the capital of New Spain in central Mexico. It was an important stop for travelers to the interior of the country, but the city itself did not attract settlers; in 1753, some 150 years after its founding, the population was a mere 3,334 inhabitants. The second half of the eighteenth century, however, saw a confluence of events which contributed greatly to the growth of the city. These factors, according to Vizcaya Canales (1971), included, among others, the subjugation of the Indian population, the colonization of the neighboring state of Tamaulipas and resulting commercial activity for the city, and the location of the *Obispado*, or bishopric, to Monterrey. By 1803, the city's population had doubled to 6,412. It continued to grow in the next half century; by 1824 there were 12,282 inhabitants and almost 27,000 by 1853 (Vizcaya Canales 1971).

During the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), Zachary Taylor's forces attacked Monterrey in September 1846 and were held off briefly by Mexican troops at the *Obispado* before the Mexican troops fled and the town was occupied. The Battle of Monterrey was the first in a series of battles in which the San Patricio Battalion took part (Smith 1963, Baker 1978, and Hogan 1997). The San Patricios were U.S. deserters, predominantly Irish-American, who joined Mexico's 'Foreign Legion' and fought the United States under the banner of St. Patrick, led by Lieutenant John Riley. After their defeat in Monterrey, the Patricios moved on with Mexican troops to other major battles in the war. The Patricio Battalion was dissolved a year after the final defeat of Mexican troops in Mexico City in August 1848, but a number of surviving Patricios settled in Mexico. Wynn (1984:29) reports that 'Today, quite a number of Rileys appear in the telephone directories of Puebla, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.'

Lesser known in Mexican history is the second San Patricio Battalion, formed some years later in Monterrey (Cavazos Garza 1996a). In July 1853, the United States sent troops to the cities of Brownsville and Laredo to reinforce the border during the Gadsden Purchase. About forty soldiers, predominantly Catholic and Irish-American, deserted and fled to Mexico; they were placed in a newly-formed San Patricio Battalion, named after their heroic compatriots who fought for Mexico in the Mexican-American War. The battalion was eventually dis-

solved during the turmoil of the Revolution of Ayutla in 1855, but the names of soldiers who belonged to the Monterrey San Patricio Battalion — Cooper, Lamm, Mayer, Morgan, Murphy, Sheridan and Smith — can be found in the 1998 Monterrey telephone directory.

During the period of French intervention in Mexico (1864-1867), Emperor Maximilian actively encouraged the establishment of U.S. colonies as a means of populating and developing the country. A number of those colonies were populated by U.S. Confederates who were not willing to lay down their arms and surrender after defeat in the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865): 'That some of the Confederate leaders began their consideration of the possibilities of migration before the cessation of hostilities is indicated by the fact that as early as February, 1865, General Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department, expressed his hope that 'in case of unexampled catastrophe to our arms and the final overthrow of the government' his services might be acceptable to Maximilian' (Rister 1945:35). While most U.S. colonies were set up in central Mexico (Carlota was the most famous), the emperor 'also opened areas northward and westward to them and assigned to each of the areas American colonization agents. Judge Oran M. Roberts and William P. Hardeman of Texas were stationed in Guadalajara, William M. Anderson and John G. Lux went to Monterrey...' (Rolle 1965:108). The ultimate failure of the colonies was more or less assured with the fall of the French regime, and while most Confederates left Mexico, some U.S. Americans, especially those who lived in major cities at the time, remained, and their descendants are still there today (see, e.g., Daniels 1947:338 and Anhalt 1998:180).

It was not until the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1884-1911) that U.S. Americans settled in large numbers in the northern regions of Mexico. 'American industrial and agricultural enterprises were spread peacefully over the whole north' of Mexico wrote Anita Brenner in 1943 in her classic book on the Mexican Revolution, *The Wind That Swept Mexico* (Brenner and Leighton 1971:16). The Díaz government established over 60 colonies throughout the northern region, 18 colonized with Mexicans, 5 with Mexican repatriates, 6 with Italians, one each with American Indians, naturalized Guatemalans, French, Belgians, Spanish, Japanese, Russian Jews, Puerto Ricans, and Boers. The Germans and Cubans had two colonies each; but the dominant group of immigrants was made up of U.S. Americans, who had twenty colonies. Most of the colonies were founded to work in agriculture, but there were industrial colonies and brewery colonies, as well as colonies which manufactured explosives (González Navarro 1960).

Díaz's regime (known as the *porfiriato*) is synonymous to some historians with the modernization of Mexico as well as with the presence of large numbers of U.S. Americans in the country, a phenomenon Schell (1992:516) has called a 'trade diaspora'. 'The architects of the [*porfiriato*] development policy ... believed that Mexico could achieve parity with its 'sister republic' by having a 'peaceful invasion' of American capital and colonists which would build Mex-

ico's economy, provide access to technology and markets and, ultimately, strengthen national sovereignty' (Schell 1992:8). The construction of the railway and mining contributed greatly to the economy of northern Mexico (see, e.g., Pletcher 1958). It was during the *porfiriato* that the city of Monterrey also underwent major industrial development:

The process began in Monterrey ... where, in addition to the huge Guggenheim interests, other American, French, German, and British investors backed industrial enterprises. Attracted by excellent transportation facilities and by the tax exemptions for industries, foreign and domestic capital was directed into Mexico's first important steel firm. ... Within a few years the company was producing pig iron, steel rails, beams, and bars, and by 1911 it was making over sixty thousand tons of steel annually. Monterrey was soon dubbed the Pittsburgh of Mexico. Other industrial concerns based in Monterrey constructed new cement, textile, cigarette, cigar, soap, brick, and furniture factories, as well as flour mills and a large bottled-water plant' (Meyer and Sherman 1995:449-450).

Unlike in Mexico City where investors actually lived in the large American colony present there during the *porfiriato* (Schell 1992), in Monterrey the majority of U.S. financiers were absentee investors. 'There were few outsiders with whom *regiomontano* [resident of Monterrey] elite families had to contend for social recognition' (Saragoza 1988:73-74). One exception, however, was Col. Joseph A. Robertson, the first Director General of Railways in Monterrey, a U.S. American who, according to Vizcaya Canales (1971:10) and Niemeyer (1966:56-57), contributed greatly to the economic development of Nuevo León and Monterrey. Martin (1907:82) calls Robertson the 'Father of Monterey.' The Colonel owned and had interests in agriculture and fruit nurseries (he introduced citrus fruit to the region), real estate, ranching, mines, foundries, brick manufacturing, loan companies, colonization, and printing and publishing (Hanrahan 1985). In 1893 he started *The Monterrey News*, the first modern newspaper in Monterrey. It was published in English because of the substantial number of English-speaking residents of Monterrey and environs — in 1895 some 900 U.S. Americans. In 1902 *The Monterrey News* started a Spanish edition, and the next year ceased publication of the English edition (Vizcaya Canales 1971:120). Saragoza notes that, while Robertson was admired for his keen entrepreneurship by both foreigners and Mexicans alike, 'still, Robertson's foresight, as important as it may have been to the city's development, was matched by the acumen among native capitalists' (Saragoza 1988:42).

Another U.S. American who played a prominent role in the development of the city of Monterrey during the *porfiriato* was Juan F. Brittingham (Brittingham 1980 and Barragán and Cerutti 1993). John Francis Clemens Brittingham was born in 1859 in St. Louis, Missouri. His family was English and Catholic in origin. Brittingham attended the Christian Brothers College in St. Louis, a Catholic insti-

tution in which many young Mexicans of the time also studied. It was at Christian Brothers that he befriended Juan Terrazas, son of General Luis Terrazas, one of the richest men in northern Mexico. At the age of 24, at the invitation of Juan Terrazas, Brittingham went to Chihuahua, and with the financial support of the Terrazas began his very prosperous life in Mexico. The younger Terrazas and Brittingham first started a small candle and soap plant. Brittingham soon branched out into mining, banking and breweries; he was also on the board of directors of numerous Monterrey firms (Haber 1989). In 1886 he married Damiana González, daughter of a prominent businessman and politician, and changed his name to Juan F. Brittingham. In the same year Brittingham brought his mother, sister and brother to Mexico. His sister Julia quickly integrated into Mexican society by her marriage to the son of an important landowner. Brittingham's brother, who arrived in Mexico with a U.S. American wife, did not acculturate so well and was not accepted in Mexican society as was his sister.

Juan Brittingham had four sons by his first wife, who died in the fourth childbirth; he had three children by a second Mexican wife and none by a third. During the 1911 Revolution and ensuing civil wars, the Brittingham children were sent to the United States, where Brittingham also lived on occasion during that tumultuous period. Brittingham, however, did not abandon Mexico, as did many U.S. Americans as a result of the Revolution. In fact, like a number of Mexican entrepreneurs, he profited from it, even entering on one occasion into a deal with Pancho Villa (Haber 1989:133). During the twenties and thirties Brittingham spent time in northern Mexico, Mexico City and Los Angeles. Brittingham's four eldest sons by his first wife established businesses and remained in Mexico; his three children by his second wife became permanent residents of the United States.

Joseph A. Robertson and Juan F. Brittingham are typical of a select group of U.S. Americans who migrated to and invested in Mexico both financially and personally during the *porfiriato*. Robertson's and Brittingham's activities were restricted primarily to northern Mexico; other U.S. Americans such as Thomas H. Braniff played similar roles in other parts of the country. These U.S. American families became an integral and respected part of the society in which they lived and worked, and many of their descendants remained in Mexico and became Mexican. Neither Brittingham nor Robertson ever became Mexican citizens, but in all other aspects they were truly bilingual and bicultural — their second-generation children, third-generation grandchildren, fourth-generation great-grandchildren, and fifth- and sixth-generation great-great-grandchildren and great-great-great-grandchildren who remained in Mexico even more so. (Both families also have descendants in the United States). Brittinghams as well as Robertsons appear in biographies of Monterrey's important personalities (see, e.g., Basave, Blanco, Saldaña and Covarrubias 1945, Basave and Gómez 1956, Vega García 1967, Vega García 1977 and Cavazos Garza 1996b). The 1998 Monterrey telephone book lists Brittinghams and Brittingham-Sadas; the names of the descendants of other U.S. Americans important in the making of Monterrey — Dil-

lon, Price, Robertson, Watson, Weber, Woods — are also still found there. And the 1998 Monterrey city map (*Guia Roji*) shows five streets named after J.A. Robertson and three after Juan F. Brittingham.

Monterrey today

According to the United States Department of State, there are 50,660 U.S. Americans today in the city of Monterrey,⁴ Mexico's third largest city with a population of over one million according to the 1990 census. It is estimated that more than four million people live in the metropolitan area of Monterrey.⁵ The popular *Insight Guide* for tourists describes this northern Mexican metropolis in the following way:

Dynamic Monterrey is the center of private enterprise and lives sometimes an uneasy relationship with the paternalistic federal government of Mexico City. The men who run Monterrey's industry tend to have closer cultural ties with the United States than with the rest of Mexico. They admire U.S. know-how, marketing procedures, and business methods. This does not mean they are not patriotic Mexicans and proud of their achievements, but it does mean that they often speak of government interference. In fact, they sound like U.S. businessmen. Many Monterrey well-to-do send their children to the U.S. for schooling... [and] Monterrey youth even play American-style football (Müller and García-Oropeza 1989:185).

Saragoza (1988:145) describes the lure of U.S. American culture for the Monterrey elite during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: 'American popular culture penetrated the social life of the elite. Moreover, the American presence in Monterrey was given greater visibility and legitimacy through the apparent admiration of members of the elite for their counterparts across the border'. Many of the elite had studied in the United States and sent both their sons and daughters to do so as well. Regarding the Monterrey elite's attitude towards post-1911 nationalist rhetoric, Zaragoza further notes (1988:145) that 'in a fundamental way, the upper class of Monterrey was at odds with the nationalist currents of postrevolutionary Mexico...'. T. Philip Terry, in the 1931 edition of his popular guide to Mexico, described Monterrey as 'a handsome, progressive, growing, bi-lingual city. It is a homey, hospitable place, noted for its friendly people, its good local government, and its civic pride. Its proximity to the Texas border, to which it is linked by a busy railway and a good auto road ..., has unconsciously influenced its people, who are often referred to as *muuy americanizado* [very Americanized] (Terry 1931:7).

Terry's description of Monterrey as a 'bilingual city' is certainly an exaggeration; the Americanization of Monterrey, however, is indeed very much in evidence, especially in the suburb of San Pedro Garza García, where most U.S. Americans as well as much of the Monterrey elite now live. The U.S. community is centered around a number of key organizations. The principal social group of the

American colony is the American Society of Monterrey (ASOMO), which was founded in 1950. ASOMO sponsors various year-round activities for the community, including the annual Fourth of July Picnic; it publishes a monthly newsletter, *ASOMO News*, with important dates and facts about the U.S. community of Monterrey, as well as the yearly Venerable Vendors List, which offers the U.S. American community suggestions for doctors, hospitals, veterinarians, hairstylists, etc. The more recent *International Community News*, a small commercial newspaper, also offers news of the U.S. and international community as well as cultural and business articles of interest to residents of Monterrey. A smaller independently-published monthly bulletin, *Talk of the Town* (now defunct) offers tips on entertainment, culture and leisure to the Monterrey English-speaking international community.

A newer yet equally important organization for the community is the Newcomers Club, 'an organization designed to provide a feeling of welcome to English-speaking women of Monterrey' (*Newcomers News* May 1998:1). The club organizes trips and tours, shopping and lunch outings, dining out, children's play groups, and bridge. Its newsletter, *Newcomers News*, appears monthly. Although the organization is aimed primarily at helping recently-arrived English-speaking women in Monterrey adjust to the daily life of the city (while their husbands are working), it also sponsors social events for entire families as well. Newcomers also maintains a small library and organizes book reviews. The Benjamin Franklin Library, formerly run by the United States Information Service in Monterrey, is now an independent public library located in the *Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales*, and serves the reading needs of the general public, including the U.S. American community. Other clubs of importance in the community include the International Quilters of Monterrey, the Monterrey Garden Club, the American Society of Monterrey, the Women's Club, the Bridge Club, the Boy Scouts, and the American Legion; many of these clubs also accept members other than U.S. Americans and are bilingual. The religious life of the colony is served by three English-speaking churches: the interdenominational Union Church of Monterrey, the Holy Family Episcopal Church, and the Immaculate Mary Catholic Church. All three have weekly prayer and Bible study groups as well as a Women's Guilds, and jointly sponsor Ecumenical events throughout the year.

Many children of U.S. Americans attend schools run by the American School Foundation of Monterrey, which includes both an elementary/middle school and a new high school. High-school students can opt for either an American-style curriculum or the more demanding Mexican *bachillerato*. A plethora of other so-called bilingual schools and colleges are also open throughout the city. The U.S. business community in Monterrey is served by the northeast chapters of the American Chamber/Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce and their publications *Business Mexico* and *Mexican Trade and Industry*, respectively. For both residents and tourists, two free Spanish-English bilingual publications, *What's on Monterrey* (Monterrey Convention and Visitors Bureau) and *Monterrey Quick Guide* (Tourist Bureau of Nuevo León), are also available.

U.S. American profiles

The following profiles of the lives of U.S. Americans in Monterrey are representative of the diversity of the contemporary U.S. community in diaspora. I have included in the discussion only those U.S. Americans whom I consider 'stable' residents, i.e., those who have been in the city at least five years.

Mrs. J

Mrs. J, as I will call her, is the subject of my first profile. She and her husband, Methodist and Lutheran, respectively, came to Mexico in the early thirties during the Presidency of Pascual Ortiz Rubio, a period in Mexican history during which Revolutionary ideologies experienced a marked shift to the right (Meyer and Sherman 1995:592-93). Mr. J, a chemical engineer, was employed by Monterrey Power and Light Company. While they had various opportunities to return to the United States, both Mr. and Mrs. J felt more at home in Mexico and remained in the country as permanent residents; they moved in the same social circles as second- and third-generation Brittinghams and Robertsons. Mr. J eventually retired in Monterrey and is now deceased; his wife has lived in Monterrey for 68 years and has no intention of returning to the U.S. Mrs. J is still a U.S. citizen, but considers herself more Mexican than U.S. American. When she does return to the States to visit her children, she says she feels different from as well as distant from U.S. Americans, who she says are not as warm as Mexicans.

Mrs. J speaks fluent though accented Spanish, watches television both in Spanish and in English, reads *El Norte* (Monterrey's premier Spanish-language newspaper) daily, but also enjoys reading *Reader's Digest* in English. She attends the Union Church and is a lifetime member of ASOMO, a charter member of the Monterrey Garden Club, a founding member of the Women's Club of Monterrey, and a member of the Foreign Club and the Cosmopolitan Club. These clubs, says Mrs. J, initially had only U.S. American members, but now accept non-U.S. American members; about half the members are upper-class Mexican women.

She also belongs to *Dar y Recibir*, a philanthropic Mexican organization which her daughter helped found. Mrs. J has four children, who attended Mexican schools and are fluent speakers of Spanish, which they speak among themselves. Three of the children are U.S. citizens and now live in the United States; one daughter married a Mexican and became a Mexican citizen. All of her four children are Spanish-dominant according to Mrs. J, although both she and her husband spoke to them in English when they were young. The children spoke Spanish with their *nana* (caretaker), servants, and playmates, and eventually began speaking to their parents in Spanish as well; Mr. And Mrs. J, however, continued using English, a phenomenon Romaine (1995) calls 'immigrant bilingualism'. When Mrs. J suggested to her husband, a German-American, that he teach the children German, his response was: 'Why, they will only answer me in Spanish.' Mrs. J's three children who now live in the United States still speak Spanish

to each other and to their mother when they telephone and visit home; Mrs. J speaks to them both in Spanish and/or English. Mrs. J's grandchildren and great grandchildren who live in Monterrey speak to her primarily in Spanish; she tries to speak to them in English to help them learn the language, but often finds it easier to use Spanish with them. They speak only Spanish with their parents. These third- and fourth-generation J grandchildren are, according to Mrs. J, one hundred percent Mexican. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the United States do not speak Spanish, and when they come to Monterrey, their Mexican cousins speak to them in English, which they are learning in school.

Mrs. J has had a bird's eye view of the changes Monterrey has undergone over the past half-century. She says that the city was always more Americanized than other cities in Mexico because of its proximity to and open admiration for the United States, but that she has noticed a substantial increase in the amount of Americanization in the past few years since NAFTA went into effect. It is most noticeable in the number of signs and advertisements in English, the fast-food restaurant invasion, and the large number of U.S. companies which now have branches in the city. Monterrey, she says, is now more than ever losing its Mexican identity. Ironically, Mrs. J and other long-time residents of Monterrey say that a U.S. American taking on a Mexican identity in present-day Monterrey does not have to change as much as in the past since *regiomontanos* themselves have become more Americanized.

Mr. B

Mr. B's father came to Monterrey during the presidency of Manuel Avila Camacho (1940-1946), a period which many historians call the official end of the Revolution. After the six previous years of the left-leaning policies of the Lázaro Cárdenas presidency, Avila Camacho began a period of renewed industrialization against the backdrop of World War II. 'In 1944 the [Mexican] Congress passed legislation allowing foreign participation in industrialization with the proviso that Mexican capital own the controlling stock in any mixed corporation' (Meyer and Sherman 1995:635). Mr. B's father arrived in Monterrey in 1945 to set up a steel pipe company with Mexican partners; the younger B, with a degree in Business Administration and Engineering, came in 1957 at the age of thirty-three to work for his father. He and his American wife have lived in Mexico since that time.

In speaking about U.S. Americans in Mexico, Mr. B makes what he considers a crucial distinction. There are those who, like himself, his father or J. A. Robertson and Juan Brittingham, came to Mexico to invest both financially as well as personally in the country. Often, much of what they made was simply put back into the economy to improve their businesses; their fates and their futures were in Mexico. They married and/or raised children in Mexico. In many cases their offspring became Mexican.

Another type of U.S. expatriate comes to Mexico just to make a quick buck, so to speak, and then return to the United States. Historically, all classes of U.S.

Americans have worked in Mexico — during the *porfiriato* there were U.S. American porters on Mexican trains — but nowadays only highly-trained and/or educated U.S. Americans are brought into the country for a limited period of time. Their job is to train Mexican counterparts, and, once this task is completed, they return home. With the advent of the NAFTA as well as the present-day emphasis on economic globalization, such U.S. Americans are working in the country in greater numbers. However, these expatriates, like those of lower socio-economic classes before them, for the most part have no personal stake in Mexico.

Mr. B has six siblings, all of whom grew up in Mexico; three married Mexicans and settled in Monterrey and three who moved back to the United States. He says that his youngest brother and sister came to Mexico at the age of thirteen and fourteen, respectively; they speak accentless Mexican Spanish. His brother, who arrived in Mexico ten years before him, at the age of 24, speaks Spanish with only a slight English accent; and Mr. B and the other siblings who came when older speak with heavier English accents, although they are proficient in Spanish. The two brothers and sister who married Mexicans speak Spanish to both their spouses and to their children. Their children are Spanish-dominant speakers and consider themselves more Mexican than U.S. American, although they have a good knowledge of English because of family background and bilingual schooling. The children of the two sisters and brother living in the United States do not know Spanish; their parents know Spanish but speak only English at home.

Mr. B and his wife, both proficient in Spanish, still speak English to each other at home. They watch television in both Spanish and English and read *El Norte* daily. They make trips to the United States two or three times a year, and their children and relatives resident in the U.S. travel to Mexico to visit them. They are both still U.S. citizens and have permanent resident status in Mexico. The B's have six children, three who live in Mexico and three who live in the United States. All six children spoke English to their parents when growing up, but Spanish with their *nana*, servants and playmates. Mr. B reports that they, like the Js, went through a period during which he and his wife would speak to their children in English, but the children would respond in Spanish. The three children married to Mexicans now speak both English and Spanish (often both) to their parents, Spanish among themselves, and Spanish to their children. The grandchildren, who are bilingual and bicultural, are Spanish-dominant and consider themselves Mexican; however, they speak to their grandparents in English, and Mr. B encourages them to do so. One of the daughters, who lives in the United States, has decided to speak Spanish to her daughter, who speaks Spanish to her cousins when she visits Mexico. His other two children in the U.S. are not teaching their children Spanish.

Mrs. P

Mrs. P is a U.S. American woman married to a Mexican. Mrs. P has been in Mexico for thirty-two years, has maintained her U.S. citizenship and in spite of her

many years outside the United States still considers herself a U.S. American. Mrs. P met her husband in the United States, but had studied Spanish at the university before coming to Monterrey. She is now fluent in Spanish, although she says she still speaks with an English accent. The Mrs. P leads what she considers a Mexican life. She belongs to no U.S. American social organizations, only a Mexican sports club; reads primarily in Spanish and is studying psychology and counseling at the Spanish-medium University of Monterrey; and now speaks primarily Spanish with her three children, two boys in their early and mid twenties and a girl in her late twenties. She spoke and read to them in English as children and encouraged them to speak English, but they spoke Spanish with their father and household servants and soon began speaking to her in Spanish also. Mrs. P notes, however, that her daughter, the first child, now speaks much better English than her two older boys because Mrs. P had more opportunity to speak to her in English during the time that she was the only child. When the two boys were born, Mrs. P had less time to devote to each child; furthermore her daughter spoke to her younger brothers in Spanish. All three children are bilingual, but Spanish-dominant, speak Spanish to each other, have no U.S. American friends, and were raised as Catholics by their non-Catholic mother who considered this religious affiliation essential for the children's welfare in predominantly Catholic Mexico. The children consider themselves Mexican, but are quick to point out that while their Mexican friends think of them as Mexican, they also consider them different from typical Monterrey teenagers. 'Liberal' is a word often used to describe them by their Mexican friends, for while Mrs. P raised her children speaking Spanish in a Mexican family, she still imparted to them U.S. social values. Her daughter says that neither her brothers nor her mother is as protective of her as Mexican brothers and mothers are of their sisters and daughters. For example, she is not yet married and her mother is not making an issue of this; she also had an apartment by herself for a few years — not something socially accepted for young women in Monterrey. The friends of the teenaged boy say they like to spend time at Mrs. P's house — to eat, talk and relax without hovering, protective parents.

Mrs. R

Mrs. R, like Mrs. P, is a U. S. American woman married to a Mexican; she too has maintained her U.S. citizenship during her fifty years in Mexico. Mrs. R met her husband in Mexico and spoke no Spanish on arrival. Like Mrs. P, she now considers herself fluent in English-accented Spanish. Mrs. R has grown children both in Mexico and in the United States. Growing up in Monterrey, her children spoke and still speak English with their mother, Spanish with their father and Spanish among themselves. The two who live in Monterrey opted for Mexican citizenship. Those who live in the United States are U.S. citizens and think of themselves as U.S. Americans, but still consider Mexico home and have not given up their Mexican citizenship. All the children are fully bilingual. The third-generation grandchildren, one of Mrs. R's sons notes, are less proficient in English because their parents speak to them in Spanish. Both Mrs. R's children and grandchildren,

like Mrs. P's children, have dual Mexican and U.S. identities, and even though one is often dominant, the other identity always remains. This too is how they are perceived by other Mexicans and U.S. Americans — cultural in-betweens.

Mr. and Mrs. A

Mr. A, a businessman, first became involved in business in Matamoros, Mexico as partial owner of a *maquiladora*, a plant in Mexico in which U.S.-made products are assembled. Mr. A found he enjoyed working with Mexicans, sold his business in the United States, and opened a new business in Monterrey with a Mexican partner, where he and his wife have been living for five years. Their children are grown and live in the United States. Both Mr. and Mrs. A knew some Spanish when they arrived in Monterrey, Mr. A because of his *maquiladora* and because both he and Mrs. A took courses before coming to Monterrey. Since their arrival in Monterrey, Mr. A's proficiency in the language has improved greatly, since his business brings him into contact with Mexicans. He also attends a Spanish-speaking Rotary Club in Monterrey, where he has made numerous contacts in the Monterrey business community. Mrs. A is not as proficient in Spanish as her husband because of her more limited contact with Mexicans, although she and Mr. A see his Mexican business partner and other business contacts socially. Most of her contacts are U.S. Americans; she is very active in women's organizations in the Monterrey American colony. Both she and Mr. A belong to ASOMO and attend the English-speaking Episcopalian Holy Family Church. They both love living in Mexico and travel extensively throughout the country. Mr. and Mrs. A feel they have a stake in Mexico; their future and Mexico's future are intertwined because Mr. A put his life's saving into his new company. They are thinking about retiring in Mexico, perhaps in San Miguel de Allende. Mr. and Mrs. A both consider themselves American, but know that they have become acculturated, especially Mr. A, who, according to his wife, has become more Mexican in his business practices.⁶

Mrs. F

Mrs. F has been in Mexico for six years. Her husband was originally sent to Monterrey by his U.S. company for a period of four years. After that, they decided to stay on for a few more years because of the weather, his good salary and company perks, and because Mrs. F had made a home away from home for the family. The Fs are stalwarts of the more recent U.S. American community in Monterrey — those who come to Mexico to work for a period and then return home. Their knowledge of Spanish is very limited; Mrs. F has only U.S. American friends and her husband, who is in management in his company, comes into contact mainly with English-speaking Mexicans. His Spanish, however, is better than hers because of his life outside the home. It is possible in Monterrey, they say, to get by with limited Spanish. Their two children attend a recently established private school. They attended the American Foundation School for a number of years, but felt out of place there. Of the some 2,000 students who attend the school,

there are only about 75 to 100 U.S. American students in any given year; the majority of students are from upper-class Mexican families who want their children to receive a bilingual education. The F children did not feel comfortable being part of a minority in school and found it difficult to make friends with the Mexican students. The F children were seven years old when they first arrived in Mexico and their Spanish proficiency is now quite high. They studied Spanish as a subject in school for six years and speak Spanish with servants and shopkeepers.

Mrs. F is an artist and keeps very busy painting as well as publishing one of the monthly newsletters for U.S. Americans, which she does from her home PC. At one point in their stay, Mrs. F's mother came to live with them, but decided to return to the States because she could not find enough friends of her own age. Mrs. F lamented that most of her friends who were in Monterrey when she first came had already left, and that occasionally she and her husband even went to Newcomers meetings just to meet new arrivals. They were careful, however, not to make friends who had arrived too recently because they did not want to have to relive with them the culture shock she says many newcomer families go through in Mexico. Mrs. F says many U.S. American families who come to Monterrey have a very difficult time living in Mexico and intend to stay only for the length of their contracts. They learn little or no Spanish, send their children either to the American Foundation School or to school in the United States, make frequent trips to the United States, and restrict their activities primarily to the Monterrey American community.

Discussion

The U.S. Americans in Monterrey whom I have discussed in the present chapter run the gamut from the more ethnocentric — the F family, for example — to the totally acculturated — Juan R. Brittingham and Mr. B. U.S. Americans living in Mexico are what sociologists have described as a 'natural' expatriate community. They are 'ecological aggregates of individuals who came to live in a locality of the host society on their own or under a variety of organizational auspices, for different purposes and at different times' (Cohen 1977:25). 'Planted' expatriate communities, on the other hand, are, according to Cohen (1977:25), 'established under the auspices of one major organization, a company or the military'. They are under the control of the sponsoring organization and are often located in a separate company compound or town (e.g., the U.S. American oil towns in Saudi Arabia). Planted expatriate communities result in maximal social distance between expatriates and host community, and while other factors such as economic dominance and cultural distance between expatriate and host communities also play a role in acculturation, expatriates living in a planted community often do not have the opportunity to interact with natives and acculturate in any real sense; this is the type of U.S. American community described by Schumann (1978). It is not surprising that in a planted community U.S. Americans remain relatively ethnocentric — monolingual and monocultural.

In natural expatriate communities, on the other hand, all degrees of acculturation are present, as we have seen in the Mexican data. At one extreme, there are those U.S. Americans who create so-called cultural enclaves or environmental bubbles (Cohen 1977:16) within the host community in order to maintain their language and identity. At the other extreme are those who become successfully integrated into the host community. In a now classic study of U.S. Americans living in the early sixties in a natural expatriate community in Spain, Nash (1970) too found U.S. Americans who represented all degrees of the acculturation/adaptation process in a culture which the author considered 'to be comparatively incompatible for Americans' (Nash 1970:xi). In a more recent study of U.S. Americans in Spain, Turell (1998:197) found that, in comparison to the British community, 'U.S. American migrated families tend to promote multilingual settings and reinforce their children's use of the many languages available in the host community.' Recent studies of U.S. Americans in northern and western Europe as well as in Brazil have further shown that second- and third-generation U.S. American children become dominant bilinguals in the language of the country of residence if indeed they remain in or grow up in that country (see papers in Varro and Boyd 1998, eds., and Dawsey and Dawsey 1995, eds.).

Similar trends of language maintenance and shift can be seen in the Monterrey data as well as in earlier studies of the U.S. American colony in Mexico City. Schell (1992) notes, for example, that in general more U.S. Americans spoke Spanish at the beginning of the *porfiriato* when the community was more integrated with Mexican society; once the 'trade diaspora' began formation and more U.S. Americans migrated to the capital, the colony became more a cultural cocoon in which many could survive with English alone. In her 1942 study of the Mexico City colony, Ethelyn Davis interviewed one woman who apologized for 'her inability to speak Spanish after 34 years of residence in the country, explaining that in those days there was little opportunity or occasion for an American woman to use Spanish' (Davis 1942:262-263); but at the same time, Davis reported an increased use of Spanish among non-mixed marriage colony residents. And in an empirical study of the acquisition of Spanish and Mexican culture by U.S. teenage children of non-mixed marriage colony residents in 1977, Weller (1978) found those adolescents who had lived in Mexico at least five years to be 'English-dominant biculturals', i.e., in spite of their dominant English-speaking environment at home and at school, the majority of the teenagers studied spoke Spanish and were familiar with Mexican culture. Weller surmises that her results probably would have been more dramatic had her subjects been either second-generation offspring or the offspring of mixed marriages.

This is precisely what we find in the Monterrey data. At the one extreme, the F children, from an English-speaking, U.S.-American oriented, first-generation, non-mixed marriage, are English-dominant bilinguals. At the other end of the spectrum, Mr. B and Mrs. J's children, born in Mexico, came from homes where both parents spoke English, and Mrs. P and R's children, also born in Mexico,

both grew up in homes where only the mother spoke English to the children. The offspring of these families (the second generation in the case of Mrs. R) are all Spanish-dominant bilinguals. The third-generation children are Spanish-dominant or English-dominant depending upon their country of birth and/or residence. A number of recent studies of U.S. American families living in Denmark (Boyd 1998), Finland (Latomaa 1998 and Boyd 1998), France (Antal 1998, Fries 1998 and Varro 1998) Norway (Lanza 1998), and Sweden (Boyd 1998) as well as studies of the descendants of U.S. Confederate soldiers who fled to Brazil (Dwasey and Dawsey, eds. 1995, especially chapters 9 and 10) have shown, in fact, that bilingualism often does not survive to the third generation of such families, i.e., the children of the U.S. Americans are bilingual, but the grandchildren usually either monolingual or strongly dominant bilinguals in the language of the country of residence. This is the case among the grandchildren of Mrs. J, Mr. B and Mrs. R who live in Mexico; they are strongly Spanish-dominant bilinguals. Even those among their children who grew up in Mexico and now live in the United States remain Spanish-dominant; they still speak Spanish to their siblings and frequently to their parents.

It is doubtful, however, that third- or fourth-generation children of U.S. Americans in Monterrey would under most circumstances ever become monolingual speakers of Spanish. We have seen from both the historical as well as from the recent Monterrey profiles that U.S. Americans who remain in Mexico as a general rule tend to make sure their children receive a bilingual education — that is, maintain their knowledge of English. This desire to pass on the language to third- and fourth-generation offspring is probably both a matter of identity as well as a matter of survival. A knowledge of English is indispensable for success in many professions in Mexico, and Monterrey is a city in which admiration for U.S. culture, including American English, is clearly in evidence among the *regiomontano* elite. This trend is further fortified by the position of the language as the global *lingua franca* (Hidalgo, Cifuentes and Flores 1996). As Hawayek de Escurdia et al. (1992:112-113) have noted: 'In [Mexico] where the knowledge of English is considered necessary for progress in practically every activity, it would not be expected that the English-speaking community felt it necessary to justify language maintenance.'

U.S. Americans have a reputation for being notoriously monolingual both at home and abroad (see, for example, Fishman 1966:30). 'It is widely believed', writes Boyd (1998:32), 'that [expatriate U.S. Americans] don't feel the need to learn the majority language where they live, because they can manage quite well with English, which is [often] spoken as a foreign language by a large portion of the population.' This notion may understandably apply to U.S. American families living in planted expatriate communities or even to some 'transient' U.S. Americans in natural communities. We have seen from the above data, however, that first-generation U.S. Americans in Monterrey do indeed learn some Spanish, especially the family member (usually the husband) who works outside the home. Second- and third-generation U.S. American children, furthermore, have the same

range of experiences as regards language maintenance and shift as do the children of immigrants in the United States or immigrants' children in any country. In Mexico, they become Spanish-dominant bilinguals by the second generation and in most cases even more Spanish dominant by the third. Hence, it appears that English is not always a dominant language, and U.S. Americans are not always 'elite bilinguals' who learn languages at their convenience. As Varro and Boyd (1998:1) have also found in their studies of U.S. Americans in northern and central Europe: 'Despite stereotypes to the contrary, many Americans do learn the languages of the country they reside in.' Those U.S. Americans who settle in Mexico as either mixed or non-mixed first-generation families often become by the second generation bilingual Mexicans with strong ties to the United States — truly 'cross-border' families.

Similar issues arise regarding questions of identity among U.S. Americans in Monterrey. First-generation short-term residents acculturate the least, as the case of Mrs. F shows (although she was by no means an extreme case); on the other hand, permanent residents, such as Mrs. J, Mr B, Mrs.P and R, Mr. and Mrs.A, J.A. Robertson and Juan F. Brittingham, while they do not give up their U.S. citizenship, feel in many respects more Mexican than U.S. American. Second-generation children of permanent residents born and raised in Mexico are bicultural, usually with the Mexican part of their identity dominant if they remain in the country. 'The sons of engineer and capitalist, Thomas Braniff, the most influential member of the American colony [in Mexico City during the *porfiriato*], chose Mexican citizenship' (Schell 1992:48)

The Monterrey data indicates similar trends. Second-generation children of long-term residents and mixed marriages who remain in Mexico identify themselves as Mexicans, not U.S. Americans; some of the children of Robertson, Brittingham, Mrs. J, Mr. B and Mrs. R also became Mexican citizens. Davis, in her 1942 study of the American colony in Mexico City, noted that 'Children who have grown up in Mexico say that while they are in Mexico they are loyal to the United States, while in the United States they are loyal to Mexico' (Davis 1942:145). Some children, in fact, would not admit to their Mexican playmates that they were part American. Smith (1991) has also noted that the children of U.S. repatriates upon return from abroad often express a feeling of alienation in their own country. They see themselves as different from their U.S. peers even after short stays in American colonies outside the United States, and they are perceived as 'not American' by their peers. When the granddaughter of one informant (Mrs.R) moved to the United States with her family, she was initially accepted by neither the Anglos nor the Hispanics; the Anglos thought she was Hispanic and the Hispanics thought she was Anglo.

Finally, we have seen that long-term permanent U.S. American residents of Monterrey as well as those U.S. Americans who marry Mexicans often retain their U.S. citizenship. It is a part of their identity as U.S. Americans that they would never consider forfeiting. Their children, however, have been able choose either

U.S. or Mexican citizenship. The child in such a marriage was registered at birth as a Mexican citizen and a U.S. citizen, and upon reaching the age of 18, had to choose one of the two. Many, in fact, did not do this, since by doing so they would have to give up one of their nationalities. It often happened that they simply ignored the requirements and unofficially retained the rights of both nationalities. There is, however, a recent development which may have an effect on this situation. In March of 1998 a new Mexican dual-nationality law went into effect (Lewis 1998 and Corchado and Trejo 1998). The retroactive Nationality Act now permits dual nationality, but not dual citizenship (a dual national cannot vote or hold high office in Mexico), to any child with Mexican nationality. In the past, those persons who declared at age eighteen had to choose 'one or the other' (or conceal 'one or the other') and hence choose between one country or the other — and, as a result, perhaps between one identity or the other; the effect of the Nationality Act may be more bicultural offspring in mixed marriages since now in Mexico one can officially be both a Mexican national as well as a U.S. citizen.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the wide range of experiences of the U.S. American diaspora community in Monterrey, Mexico from both a historical as well as a contemporary perspective. The processes of acculturation as regards language and identity in this community are in many respects similar to those of all communities in diaspora who experience competing linguistic and value systems and who in the process bring together traits of both cultures (see, e.g., the papers in Varro and Boyd 1998 and Dawsey and Dawsey 1995). In fact, the U.S. emigrant experience in Mexico, while in a number of significant ways different, also parallels in some regards that of Mexican diasporas in the United States — Spanish monolingualism or dominant Spanish bilingualism among US Americans in Mexico, or English monolingualism or dominant English bilingualism among Mexicans in the United States (see, e.g., Valdés 1988) — are common, and the idea of the cultural amalgam present in the term 'Mexican-American' in the United States is well matched by that of 'American-Mexican' in Mexico. This experience, I believe, is reflected in the following short passage from Elizabeth Borton de Treviño's autobiography about her life as a U.S. American married to a Mexican, which I feel nicely captures the essence of my presentation:

Just how does a place, at first new and strange, come to take on a beloved familiarity? Living in another country, with people of another upbringing, under new sets of traditions, speaking another language, at what moment does one suddenly feel that he has fallen into place and is no longer alien? It happens imperceptibly. There comes a time when unconsciously one slips into thinking in the language so painfully learned from books, when the pattern of one's thoughts grows naturally from the first strange but dutiful [sic] accepted premise, into a new design. There is a moment when suddenly all that was outlandish, quaint, and exotic, is restored to strangeness

only by the amazed comments of visitors from afar (Borton de Tre-
viño 1953:9).

NOTES

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² Private American citizens residing abroad. April 1998. Bureau of Consular Affairs, U. S. Department of State:
<http://www.travel.state.gov/amcit_numbers.html> (12 October 1998).

³ I worked in Monterrey as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Languages of the University of Monterrey during the 1994-5 academic year, and since that time have made three to four trips annually to Monterrey to do fieldwork for projects on English borrowings in Mexican Spanish (see, e.g., Baumgardner 1997).

⁴ Steven Lewis of Edimax estimates that only about 10% of this number are U.S. Americans born and raised in the United States. A large number of Mexicans, especially middle- and upper-class Mexicans from northern Mexico, go to the United States so that their children will be born there — any child born in the United States is *sui solis* a U.S. citizen. Hence, approximately 45,000 included in this number are 'technical' U.S. residents. Of the some 5,000 remaining U.S. Americans in Monterrey, Lewis estimates that about 2% (1,000) are permanent residents and 8% (4,000) temporary residents.

⁵ The Metropolitan area includes Monterrey, Apodaca, General Escobedo, Guadalupe, Santa Catarina, and San Pedro Garza García.

⁶ See Kenna and Lacy (1994) for a discussion of Mexican business culture.

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